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ALL AROUND

THE BAY OF PASSAMAQUODDY

WITH THE INTERPRETATION OF ITS INDIAN
NAMES OF LOCALITIES

BY

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ALL AROUND THE BAY OF PASSAMAQUODDY

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Travelers coming from the south will find in the deeply indented coast lands of the state of Maine a type of landscape differing considerably from others previously noticed. Through the fiord-like character of Maine's tidewater section the water element everywhere blends in with *terra firma*, which alternately projects and recedes, and by the well-marked color contrast between the blue ocean and the green or somber-hued earth strikes our sight agreeably. The level shore lands of the southern Atlantic states are here replaced by hills, headlands, and capes of bolder outlines, partly clothed in the fainter green of northern vegetation, while other elevations exhibit the rocky, ocean-beaten foundation upon which they are built. The dark-hued pine and fir trees, which in other countries live in the mountains only, here descend to the sea-coast, enlivening the tops and sides of the numerous islands which lie scattered along the coast. The further we proceed northeastward along the coast, the more the scenery assumes a northern character. This is well evidenced by the spare vegetation and the thinness of the humus which we notice everywhere in and around Passamaquoddy bay, an extensive basin, the waters of which are fed by the majestic St Croix river from the north and by the St George or Megigadevic river from the east. The mainland encompasses this bay on all sides, fringing it with rock-bound promontories and some flat sand spits; only on the southeast side does it open toward the Atlantic ocean, and there a row of islands forms its limit and affords numerous passages suitable for navigation.

The elevations encircling the bay of Passamaquoddy, though bolder than those we see further south, are mostly flat-topped and of tame outlines. They are nearing an incline of 20 to 30 degrees, and therefore the local erosion through the impact of rain is not very considerable. None of the hills or islands in the bay rise above sea level more than about 300 feet. A feature that may be pertinently called the *headland shore* is prominent here.

Whenever a portion of the mainland or of one of the larger islands in this region advances toward the salt water it first

sinks down, forming a depression, and then rises as a knoll or rounded hillock or hill before it plunges its rocky face abruptly into the ocean. These formations, appropriately termed *heads* or *headlands*, are frequent all around Passamaquoddy bay, Campobello island, Cobscook bay, and in many other sections of the Maine and New Brunswick coasts. Beaches filled with coarse gravel, the detritus of the rocky shores, form the transitory stage between the headlands and the more level promontories or *points*. Not infrequently one headland succeeds another in a line before reaching the water, and even after reaching the shore they reappear, jutting out from the briny element, two or three in succession, and lying in one continuous file. This I have observed, *e. g.*, on the north shore of Cobscook bay, west of Eastport, Maine. Campobello island, New Brunswick, is replete with "heads" on its far-extending shores, the island being eleven miles long from north to south; thus we have Bald head, Wilson head, East Quoddy head, Friar's head, Head harbor—whereas the term "point," less frequent there, appears in more numerous instances on the west side of the bay and up the St Croix river.

Two large *whirlpools*, perceptible in the channel of the St Croix river, are objects of great curiosity to the strangers visiting these parts. One of them occurs between Moose island and the southern end of Deer island, New Brunswick; the other, of minor proportions, lies two miles above, the river being over one mile wide at each place. They are carefully avoided by people passing, either in a white man's boat or in the Indians' canoe, for, like Charybdis of old, they are liable to capsize any small craft that ventures to come too near. They owe their existence not exclusively to the shock produced by the impact of the currents from the bay meeting those of the river, but also to the incoming tides and to a difference of temperature between the two bodies of water.

The air temperature is generally low on the bay and around it. Winter begins in October, and even at midsummer persons who are not provided with warm clothing will often feel a chill pervading their system when a sudden breeze breaks in from the north or a thick fog stays till noontime over the ever-moving waters. The weather is generally serene throughout the year, but nevertheless morning fogs are of frequent occurrence.

The Canadian Pacific is the only railroad company that brings visitors to the hospitable shores of Passamaquoddy bay, but there are numerous steamboats plying between St Andrews, St Stephen, Calais, and Eastport and the neighboring cities of St Johns,

Bar Harbor, and Portland. Whether the tourist visits these parts for sightseeing or for restoring impaired health by the aid of their bracing sea-breezes, he is sure to take a peculiar interest in the native Indians, whom he sees peddling their neat baskets and toys along the streets, on steamboats, and on hotel verandas. But little attention is needed to scan the Indian among a crowd of people by his dusky complexion and a sort of nonchalance in his deportment. His appearance and habits show him to be a living and moving survival from prehistoric times.

The Passamaquoddy Indians of Maine constitute a portion of the northeastern or Abnâki group of the widespread Algonkinian stock, of which the ancient domain extended over a large area of the United States and Canada. The Abnâki Indians now surviving are divided into five sections, among which (1) the *Penobscots* in Oldtown are the nearest affinity in language and race to the (2) *St Francis Indians* of Canada; (3) the *Passamaquoddies*, whose nearest kinsmen are (4) the *Milicites*, or Etchemins (this is their Miemac name), scattered along the St Johns river, New Brunswick; (5) the *Miemacs*, settled in Nova Scotia and on the east coast of New Brunswick.

The present Passamaquoddies are about five hundred in number, and a large intermixture with white blood has taken place, which according to a safe estimate may amount to one-third of the tribe. In about the same proportion they have also preserved their Indian vernacular, which among its European loan words counts more of English than of French origin. Many of these natives exhibit unmistakably the full physical marks of Indian descent—the long, straight, and dark hair, the strong nasal bone, and a rather dark complexion. The cheek-bones are not very prominent. The majority of the tribe are slim-built and of a medium stature. They are not increasing, and their Indian congeners on the Penobscot river are positively on the decrease.

No central chief rules over these Indians now, but each of their three settlements in Maine has a sagum or elective governor. These settlements all lie on watercourses or on the seashore. The one nearest to Eastport is at Pleasant point, near the town of Perry; another is in a suburb of Calais, and a third one formerly lived upon Lewis island, but transferred its seats to the neighboring Peter Dana's point, near Princeton, on the Kennebassis river, about 42 miles north of Eastport. Fishing is one of their chief industries, but in this they now follow entirely the example set by the white man; they care nothing for agriculture, and their village at Pleasant point is built upon the rockiest and

most unproductive ground that could have been selected. The same may be said of some other Indian settlements, for many Indians do not require any better soil to rest their houses upon.

The industries now forming their main support are the manufacture of toy boats from birch bark, of fishing canoes from the same material, of fans from ash-wood, and, chiefly, of ornamental and fancy baskets from the wood of the yellow ash. The baskets are made by the women, and during the summer season the men sell them in the markets, especially at the watering places and in the commercial centers of the eastern states. The women display a high degree of taste in selecting their models for these tiny, elegant, and delicate art-products. The ash-wood is split into splints or blades of extreme thinness by machinery, seldom wider than an inch, then dyed in all possible, but always bright, colors. After this the splints are interlaced so as to form baskets of the most varied shapes. During the work of interlacing, blades of sweet-scented grass are inserted in the baskets, and thus "finished" they are sent to the stores with a fragrant odor, which clings to them for months and increases their salability.

The present area of the Passamaquoddy dialect is confined within a small district in Washington county, in southeastern Maine, and limited to the three settlements already mentioned. We may, however, add to it the area of the Milicite or "Broken language" dialect, which is heard in five or six Indian villages on the St Johns or Ulastuk river, in New Brunswick, and differs but little from Passamaquoddy. In former centuries these two dialectic areas were much more extensive, the proof of this resting in the spread of geographic names worded in Passamaquoddy over the whole of Washington and Hancock counties, a part of Aroostook county, Maine, and over the western part of the New Brunswick territory. Just as large as this historic area was that of the Penobscot dialect, for, as the local names still demonstrate, it embraced the whole Penobscot river basin, with the valleys of its numerous tributaries.

Inquiry into the signification of historic and actual geographic names of Indian origin has of late become popular among the educated classes of Americans. It is just twelve years since Charles Godfrey Leland encouraged those who might be able to accomplish the task to solve the riddles contained in the names of that country, most of which have a sound so musical and harmonious.* Long acquainted with the great historic value of

*The Century Magazine, New York, 1884, vol. 28, pp. 668-677, in Leland's article: "Legends of the Passamaquoddies."

topographic names, Leland's suggestion induced me, while studying the dialect, to listen to the opinions of capable Indians when I requested them to interpret a series of these names. Many interpretations thus obtained were so crude and ungrammatical that they could not be sustained for a moment; but the majority of those resting on a correct linguistic basis disclosed the fact that they are mostly compound nouns and combinations either of two substantives or of an adjective and a substantive, with the substantive standing last. In the first case, the noun standing first is sometimes connected with the noun standing second by the case-suffix *i*, as in *Edu'ki m'ni'ku*, *Deer island*, from *ědúk, deer*. The local names around the bay mostly refer to the watery element, for the terms *beach*, *sand-bar*, *cliff*, *rocky shore*, *island*, *headland*, *point*, *bay* and *cove*, *current* and *confluence* make up almost the whole terminology of the region. The frequent ending *-k* (*-ăk*, *-ŷk*, *-ôk*, *-ûk*) sometimes marks the plural of a noun considered as animate, but more frequently it is the *locative case-ending* observed in all Algonkinian dialects under various forms. This case-suffix corresponds minutely to our prepositions *at*, *in*, *on*, *upon*, *at the place or spot of*. It also obtains in the Penobscot and Micicite dialects; but in the southwest corner of Maine occur a number of geographic names in *-et*, *-it*, *-ot*, which approximates the dialect in which they originate to that of Massachusetts and of Eliot's Bible. So we meet there with names like *Abadasset*, *Harrisseekit*, *Manset*, *Millinoket*, *Ogunquit*, *Pejepscot* (*Sheepscot*), *Webhannet*, and *Wiscasset*. The name *Penobscot* cannot be introduced here, for its original form in that dialect is *Panawámpskek*, "where the conical rocks are."

The *Indian names* of elevations, rivers, and localities are in this article spelt in a scientific alphabet in which the vowels possess the value of and are pronounced as they are in the languages of the European continent.* To readers it will soon appear how inconsistently the Indian names were rendered by the American and British natives in their pronunciation and how often parts of them were dropped entirely. These Indian names are generally easy to pronounce for Americans; still, Algonkinian dialects have a tendency to drop vowels when standing between consonants at the beginning of words. This causes a peculiar difficulty of utterance, and makes some of them unpronounceable to a majority of English-speaking people.

**g* is always hard and *ž* has the sound of *e* in *bucket*.

A LIST OF INDIAN GEOGRAPHIC NAMES OCCURRING AROUND PASSAMAQUODDY BAY, MAINE, WITH THEIR DERIVATIONS

- Bar Harbor**, Mount Desert, and Mount Desert island are all called in Indian Péssunk or Péssan, "at the clam-digging place or places;" from ess, "shell," referring here to the clam only; p- prefix, -an verbal ending.
- Bay of Fundy**, a storm-beaten corner of the Atlantic ocean between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, is to the Indians Wekwabegituk, "waves at the head of the bay," -tuk referring to waters driven in waves or moved by the tide. Nowhere else in the world are the tides so high as in this bay. (See Oak bay.)
- Bishop's point**, a locality on north head of Grand Manan island, New Brunswick. Its Indian name, Budebé-uhigen, means death-trap of whales, from budebé-u, "whale"; -higen, a suffix which stands for "tool" or "instrument."
- Campobello island**, New Brunswick, is called Elagwídek, from its position between Maine and the mainland of New Brunswick, "floating between;" éba, between; gwíden, floating. Another Indian name for this island is Edlitik, which seems to refer to the sudden deepening of the waters on the west side.
- Cherry island**, a rocky formation just south of Indian island, New Brunswick, is known to the native Indian as Mísik négúsis, "at the little island of trees." Mísi is "tree" or "trees;" mísik, "where trees stand;" négú, abbreviation of m'níku, "island;" -sis, diminutive ending.
- Cobscook bay**, a body of salt water lying west and southwest of Moose island. It is the Indian term kápskuk, "at the waterfalls." The tide, rising here daily to about twenty feet, enters into the sinuosities of the shorelands, and the waters returning to the ocean form rapids, riffles, or cascades (kápsku).
- Deer island**, New Brunswick, a large isle at the southern extremity of Passamaquoddy bay, is Edúki m'níku, "of the deer the island."
- D'Orville's head**, eminence where St Croix river empties into Passamaquoddy bay; Kwagustehus'k, "at the dirty mountain;" from kwagwéyu, "dirty;" tchús, "mountain;" -k, locative particle, "at." The name was long ago corrupted into the more popular "Devil's head."
- Eastport, city and harbor**, has the same Indian name as *Moose island*, upon which it is built, Muselénk. This is a corruption from the hybrid compound Mús-éländ'k, its second half being a corruption of *island*, with the locative -k appended. The locality where the last moose was killed, about a century ago, lies on its northern part. The genuine Indian name for Moose island is Mús m'níku. The Moose islanders (and the Eastport people especially) are called Muséléniek.
- Eel brook**, a small rivulet at the northern end of Grand Manan island, is in Indian Katekádik, which stands for Kat-akádik, and signifies "where (-k) eels (kát) are plentiful (akádi)."

- Gardner's lake**, in Machias township, is called Néndamsw' águn, the term néndam designating a species of fresh-water fish rushing up brooks and channels (ném, *upward*); águn, "lake."
- Grand Manan**, New Brunswick, a large island with high shores, south of Passamaquoddy bay, is the Menanúk of the Indians. The name probably signifies "at the island" in the Miemac dialect.
- Herring cove**, a large sea-beach on the east side of Campobello island, facing Fundy bay and Grand Manan island, is called Pitchamkíak, "at the long beach;" pitchéyu, *it is long*; ámk, *gravel*; -kie, *beach*; locative case, -kíak. This cove has lately been made accessible by a good road leading to it from the Tyn-y-coed hotel, and with its picturesque views and its multicolored pebbles forms quite an attraction to visitors.
- Indian island**, New Brunswick, forms a narrow strip of one and a half miles' length at the southwestern entrance to Passamaquoddy bay, and was inhabited by these Indians before they crossed over to Lincoln's point and Pleasant point, Maine. They call it Misik-négús, "at the tree island." The name of Cherry island (q. v.) is a diminutive of this.
- Kendall's head**, a bold headland in northern part of Moose island and facing Deer island, New Brunswick, upon the "western passage" of St Croix river, is called by the Indians Wabígenĕk, or "at the white bone," or Wabígen, "white bone," from the white color of a rock ledge on its top; wábi, *white*; -gen or -ken, *bone*; -k, *at*.
- Kunaskwámkuk**, abbreviated frequently into Kunaskwámk, is a comprehensive name given to the town of St Andrews, New Brunswick, to the heights above and north of it, where the Algonquin hotel is erected, and to the coast between St Andrews and Joe's point. The name signifies "at the gravel beach of the pointed top;" kuná, "point," referring to a sandbar projecting into the bay; kunaskwá, "pointed top or extremity;" ámk, "gravel," and here "gravelly beach;" -nk, locative ending, *at, on, upon*.
- Lubec**, a village south of Eastport, at the narrows between Campobello island and the mainland of Maine, is called Kebamkíak, "at the beach forming the narrows." Kebé-ik means "at the narrows," and is the same word as the Cree and Montagnais: Kébek, *Quebec*, in Canada; -kíak is the locative case of kie, "at the beach or beaches."
- Machias and East Machias**, two towns on the southern trend of the Maine coast, in Washington county, which were settled from Scarborough, in Maine, represent the term metchiéss, *partridge*.
- Meddybemps village and Meddybemps lake**, drained by Dennys river, Dennysville township, are called after a fresh-water fish, mède-béss'm, or the *hampout*.
- Moose island**. (See Eastport.)
- Moosehead lake**, in the interior of Maine, Piscataquis county, is called in Passamaquoddy Ktchi-ságuk, "at the wide outlet." A literal translation of the English name would be Musátp ágēmuk; mús, "moose deer;" -atp suffix referring to "head;" ágēmuk, "at the lake." Chesuncook is in *Penobscot* dialect the name of a lake to the

northeast of Moosehead lake, and signifies "at the big outlet," Ktchi-sánkuk.

Mount Katahdin, on Penobscot river, though its name is worded in the Penobscot dialect, may be mentioned here as signifying "large mountain;" the syllable kt- is equivalent to ktchí, "large, great, big;" ad'ne, ad'na, is "mountain." The Penobscot Indians pronounce it Ktá'd'n (*a* short); the Passamaquoddies, Ktád'n (*a* long).

Norumbega is the alleged name of a river and some ancient villages or Indian "cities" in Maine, spelled in many different ways, but never located with any degree of certainty. The name does not stand for any Indian settlement, but is a term of the Abnáki languages, which in Penobscot sounds nalambígi, in Passamaquoddy nalabégik—both referring to the "still, quiet" (nala-) stretch of a river between two riffles, rapids, or cascades; -bégik, for nipégik, means "at the water." On the larger rivers and watercourses of Maine ten to twenty of these "still water stretches" may occur on each; hence the impossibility of determining the sites meant by the old authors speaking of these localities. *Norantsuak*, now Norridgewok, on middle Penobscot river, has the same meaning.

Oak bay, a large inlet of St Croix river, east of the city of Calais, is named Wekwáiyik—"at the head of the bay."

Passamaquoddy bay, according to its orthography now current, means the bay where pollock is numerous or plentiful. The English spelling of the name is not quite correct, for the Indians pronounce it Peskéděmakádi pekudebógek. Peskédem is the pollock-fish or "skipper," "jumper;" called so from its habit of skipping above the surface of the water and falling into it again; -kadi, -akadi is a suffix, marking plenty or abundance of the object in question. (Cf. the name Acadia, derived from this ending.) There are several places on the shores of this bay especially favorable for the catch of this food-fish, like East Quoddy head, etc, as mentioned previously in this article. Quoddy, the abbreviated name now given to a hotel in Eastport, should be spelt: Kadi or Akádi, for there is no *u*-sound in this Indian term, and it would be better to write the name of the bay, if scientific accuracy is desired, "Peskedemakadi bay."

Pembroke lake, a long water sheet, stretching from northwest to southeast, is in Indian Ímnakwan águm, or "the lake where sweet tree-sap is obtained." Mákwan, or "sweet," stands for the liquid sugar running from the sugar maple in season. Águm means "lake."

Pleasant point, Indian village on the western shore of St Croix river, is called Sibá-ik, Sibáyik: "at the water-passage, on the thoroughfare for ships or canoes," which refers to the sites just south of the "point."

Princeton, a village on the Kennebasis river, south shore (an affluent of the St Croix river from the west), is called Mdakmígnk, "on the rising soil;" from mdá, "high, rising," and kmígu, an abbreviation of ktakmígu, "land, soil, territory."

Red Beach, on west shore of lower St Croix river, Calais township, above Robbinston, is named Mekwamkés'k, "at the small red

beach ;" from *mékw(a)*, "red ;" *únk*, "beach ;" *-es*, diminutive ending, "small, little," and *'k*, *-ûk*, locative case suffix, "at, on."

Schoodic or **Skúdik**, "at the clearings," is a topographic term given to the Schoodic or Grand lake, on headwaters of St Croix river ; also to the St Croix river itself, and to the town of Calais, built on its lower course. That these clearings were effected by burning down the timber appears from the term itself ; for *skwút*, *skút* means *fire*, and the name really means "at the fire." Another *Skúdik lake* lies in the southeastern corner of Piscataquis county, Maine.

St Croix river, in Indian *Skúdik sîp*, "the river of clearings ;" from the clearings on its shores or on the *Skúdik lake*, where the river takes its origin. For a long distance it forms the frontier between Maine (Washington county) and New Brunswick. The French name, "Holy Cross," came from a cross erected by early French explorers.

St Francis river, in Canada, Ontario province, upon which Indians cognate to the Penobscots of Maine are living, is called by them *Lesigantuk*, a contraction of *Ulastigán-tuk*. The same name is given to their village and to the natives themselves.

St George and **St George river**, emptying into the northeast end of Passamaquoddy bay, are just as well known by their Indian name, *Megigadéwik*, "many eels having ;" from *mégi*, *many* ; *gat* or *kat*, *eel* ; *-wi*, adjectival ending ; *-k*, locative case suffix.

St John river, running near the western border of New Brunswick and its large tributary, the Aroostook, are both called in Penobscot and in Passamaquoddy, *Ulastúk*, "good river," meaning river of easy navigation, without cascades, falls, or rapids ; from *úla*, *wúli*, *good* ; *-tuk*, tidal river and waters driven in waves.

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